Railway Routes and Pilgrim Centers to provide incidental coverage of mobile service to the near by villages.

(v) In remote and far-flung areas, which are not possible to be covered with terrestrial technology, VPTs are planned to be provided on Digital Satellite Phone Terminals (DSPTs).

(vi) Replacement of MARR VPTs with reliable technology (WILL/ Landline).

(vii) Conversion of the small exchanges like 256 P C-DOT and SBM exchanges upto 1500 lines capacity into RSUs (Remote Switch Units) for enabling the extension of modern telecom facilities to rural areas.

(viii) BSNL has entered into an agreement with Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for providing Village Public Telephones (VPTs) facility to 66822 accessible, undisputed and undisturbed uncovered villages having population more then 100 as per census 1991 in the country.

(ix) In addition, USO(F) has also entered into agreement with some private operators for providing rural community phones and rural household direct exchange lines.

Network congestion in telephone

1675. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "TRAI slams BSNL over network congestion" as reported in the media;

(b) if so, whether BSNL has taken any action to check network congestion;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) As reported by BSNL they have taken number of steps to streamline the procedure for providing POIs and majority of POIs are currently being provided within 90 days to 120 days time, though the interconnection agreement between BSNL and the private operators provides a time frame of 12 months.

Many a times provision of POI is delayed even if BSNL has made necessary arrangements, due to the non-readiness of the private operators. Operators are also continuously announcing new tariff plans which lead to spurt in traffic and thereby congestion in some places. Additional POI capacity required cannot be provided immediately as due process has to be followed and at many places interconnect capacity is also not readily available.

Further, BSNL has requested private operators to give their demand forecast so that advance planning for procurement of equipment, needed for provision of POIs, can be done to the extent feasible.

(d) Does not arise inview of (c) above.

Joint agreement with America

†1676. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are apprehensions regarding adverse impact on interests on India due to implementation of the joint agreement with America, signed between these two countries on 18th July, 2005;

(b) if so, nature of these apprehensions and whether discussion was held on this regard with President Bush in Conference of G-8 nations; and

(c) if so, the comprehensive details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) The US Congress is yet to pass the final legislation that would facilitate civil nuclear energy cooperation between India and the United States. The US House of Representatives voted on a Bill on 26 July 2006 and the US Senate Foreign Relations

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.